



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF MUSIC

2017-2018
season of events

In memory of Steven Stucky
A piano recital by Xak Bjerken
presented by Norbert Palej

Friday, January 26, 2018
7:30 pm, Walter Hall, 80 Queen's Park

PROGRAM

***Images, Book II* (1908)**

Cloches à travers les feuilles ("Bells through the leaves")

Et la lune descend sur le temple qui fut ("And the moon descends on the ruined temple")

Poissons d'or ("Goldfish")

Claude Debussy
(1862-1918)

Four Fantasies after poems of Richard Dehmel, Op. 9 (1900)

Alexander Zemlinsky
(1871-1942)

Sonata for Piano (2015)

Steven Stucky
(1949-2016)

Intermission

***Ephemera* (2014)**

Jesse Jones
(b. 1978)

Post-Modern Homages, Set II

Sonatina DCXL (1991)

Gymnopedie No. 4 (1984)

Stephen Hartke
(b. 1952)

The Flames of the Sun Make the Desert Flower Hysterical (2013)

Sonata No. 9, Op. 68 "Black Mass" (1912)

Alexander Scriabin
(1872-1915)

We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

Program Note and Biography

The program serves as a frame around the wonderful Sonata from 2015 by my dear late friend, Steven Stucky. I have chosen composers that influenced Steve, Debussy and Scriabin, and two composers he admired, his student Jesse Jones, and his colleague, Stephen Hartke, both now teaching at Oberlin College-Conservatory.

When Schoenberg inaugurated the Society for Private Musical Performances in 1918, he featured recent piano works by Debussy and Scriabin on his first program. That compelling choice inspired me to bookend this program with these two colourists, and show how composers have built on this tradition of colour and counterpoint in the last century. From Debussy's cool, moonlit scene to the brilliant colours of Hartke, each composer explores the unique overtones of the modern piano. And at the heart of this network of musicians is Stucky, teacher of my host this evening, Norbert Palej, a mentor who has been so influential to so many.

Note by Xak Bjerken

Pianist **Xak Bjerken** has appeared with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Spoleto Festival Orchestra, Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra, the Schoenberg Ensemble, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic in the Walt Disney Concert Hall. He has performed at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Glinka Hall in St. Petersburg, the Konzerthaus in Berlin, and for many years performed throughout the United States as a member of the Los Angeles Piano Quartet. He has performed with the Cuarteto Casals, the Prazak, New Zealand, and Miami string quartets, and held chamber music residencies at the Tanglewood Music Center, Spoleto Festival and Olympic Music Festival. He is the director of Ensemble X, a new music ensemble, and has served on the faculty of Kneisel Hall, the Eastern Music Festival, and at the Chamber Music Conference at Bennington College. Bjerken has worked closely with composers György Kurtág, Sofia Gubaidulina, Steven Stucky, and George Benjamin, and over the next two years, will be presenting premieres of piano concertos by Stephen Hartke, Elizabeth Ogonek, and Jesse Jones. He released his first solo recording on CRI in 2001, and has since recorded for Koch International, Chandos, Albany Records, Artona, and is about to release his third recording for Open G Records, presenting solo and chamber works by Steven Stucky. Xak Bjerken is Professor of Music at Cornell University where he co-directs Mayfest, an international chamber music festival with his wife, pianist Miri Yampolsky. Bjerken studied with Aube Tzerko at the University of California at Los Angeles and received his Master's and Doctoral degrees from the Peabody Conservatory as a student of and teaching assistant to Leon Fleisher.

Coming up at the New Music Festival

UTSO with soprano Brittany Cann

Jan 27 | 7:30 pm | MacMillan Theatre
\$30, \$20 senior, \$10 student

(free for all UofT students with a valid T-Card,
space permitting)

Jazz Faculty with Special Guests

Jan 28 | 7:30 pm | Walter Hall
Free

COMING UP IN THE THURSDAYS AT NOON SERIES

12:10 pm | Walter Hall | Free Admission

Feb 1: Rob MacDonald, guitar

Feb 8: DMA Competition Winner Rudin Lengo, piano

Feb 15: Teng Li, viola and Lydia Wong, piano